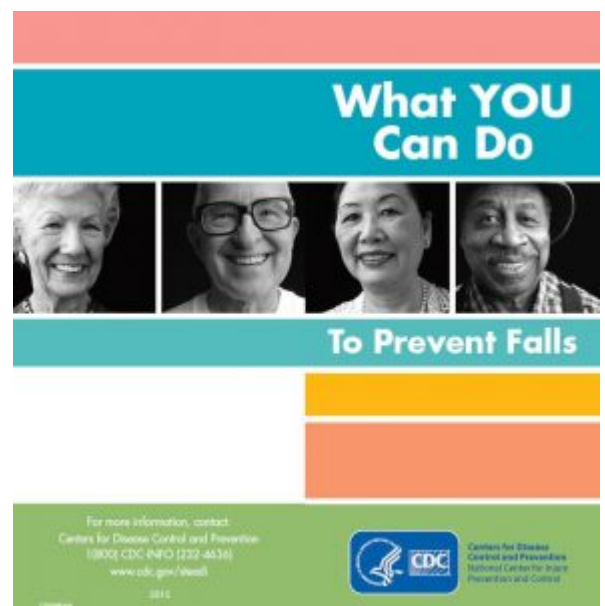


Sept. 22 Falls Prevention Program for Seniors Highlight of Falls Prevention Awareness Week

DOVER – Falls among older adults are the leading cause for injury deaths and non-fatal injuries, including hip and brain injuries. Falls are painful and can be disabling, leading to drastic life changes and costing an average of \$30,000 per fall injury in hospital expenses alone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The number of seniors over 64 admitted to Delaware hospitals for treatment of fall injuries rose from 2,007 in 2013 to 2,239 in 2016, according to the Delaware Trauma System Registry.

To encourage Delawareans to support fall prevention strategies, Governor John C. Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long have proclaimed the week of September 17-23, 2017 as Falls Prevention Awareness Week in Delaware. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) will celebrates its 10th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day on September 22, 2017 the first day of the fall season.



Locally, the Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention Falls Prevention Team, Division of Public Health (DPH), Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities and community partners will host a free public falls prevention program. It will be held at the Modern Maturity Center, 1121

Forrest Ave., Dover, DE 19904, on **Sept. 22, 2017 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Coalition members will perform an interactive skit in which an older adult will learn how a few changes to his home and daily habits can help him avoid falls. Members involved in the demonstration represent Bayhealth Medical Center, Christiana Care Health System, Easter Seals, EmpowerAbility Inc., Volunteer Delaware 50+ and the A Matter of Balance program. Helpful information, resources, and giveaways will be available. Mrs. Delaware 2017, Ivana Hamilton, will attend to boost awareness of this important issue.

“Older adults want to stay active and independent; falls or even the fear of falling can impact this,” said Diana Curtis, RN, MSN, CSTR of the Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention. “All seniors have the power to prevent a fall if they learn simple actions to keep them safe.” The Injury Prevention Coalition is a statewide program that is staffed by the DPH Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), EMS and Preparedness Section.

The Coalition’s Falls Prevention Team recommends that seniors reduce their risk of falling by accessing both online, and community resources, such as taking A Matter of Balance classes to build strength and flexibility through easy, effective exercises. Older adults can remain steady on their feet if they stay active and exercise regularly, discuss concerns about falls with their primary care provider and review medications with a doctor or pharmacist, get adequate sleep and nutrition, have their hearing and vision checked and corrected as needed, and assess living spaces regularly, and remove, fall hazards.

Communities can join this effort to reduce risk factors for falls and support the overall health and the ability of all persons to live well and age in place. Here are a few practical tips: maintain walkways, paint curbs and slopes, install handrails, and provide ramps, automatic doors, and add

curb cuts to assist people of all ages with mobility issues.

More information about falls, injury prevention, and services and supports for older adults are available through these resources:

- Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention, dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/ems/injuryprevention/
- Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dsaapd/
- Delaware Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is available 24/7 at 1-800-223-9074 or DelawareADRC.com
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/
- National Council on Aging, Center for Healthy Aging, National Falls Prevention Resource Center: <https://www.ncoa.org/center-for-healthy-aging/falls-resource-center/>

For more information about the Delaware Injury Prevention Coalition's Falls Prevention Team, contact Diana Curtis at 302-744-6295 or Diana_Curtis@bayhealth.org. The Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention includes volunteers, business owners, health care institutions, state and local government agencies. Its vision is a safe, injury-free Delaware.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS,

urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.